

THE BOSTON INFORMER

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The newsletter for people who care about Boston

September-October 1995

The new \$1.8 billion third harbor tunnel, the Ted Williams Tunnel, is scheduled to open to commercial traffic only on December 15, 1995. Although the tunnel is two lanes in each direction, only one lane in each direction will be open until 2002 when the tunnel is opened to general traffic.

The decision to open this year, despite being so far behind schedule, means most of the permanent support systems, such as power, fire alarm, safety, surveillance and toll-collection systems, will not be ready. Temporary systems will be installed for an extra \$26 million.

The Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (MassPike) which will operate, and perhaps own, the tunnel has not yet fixed the toll fee, although \$4 to \$5 has been called necessary to pay for the tunnel.

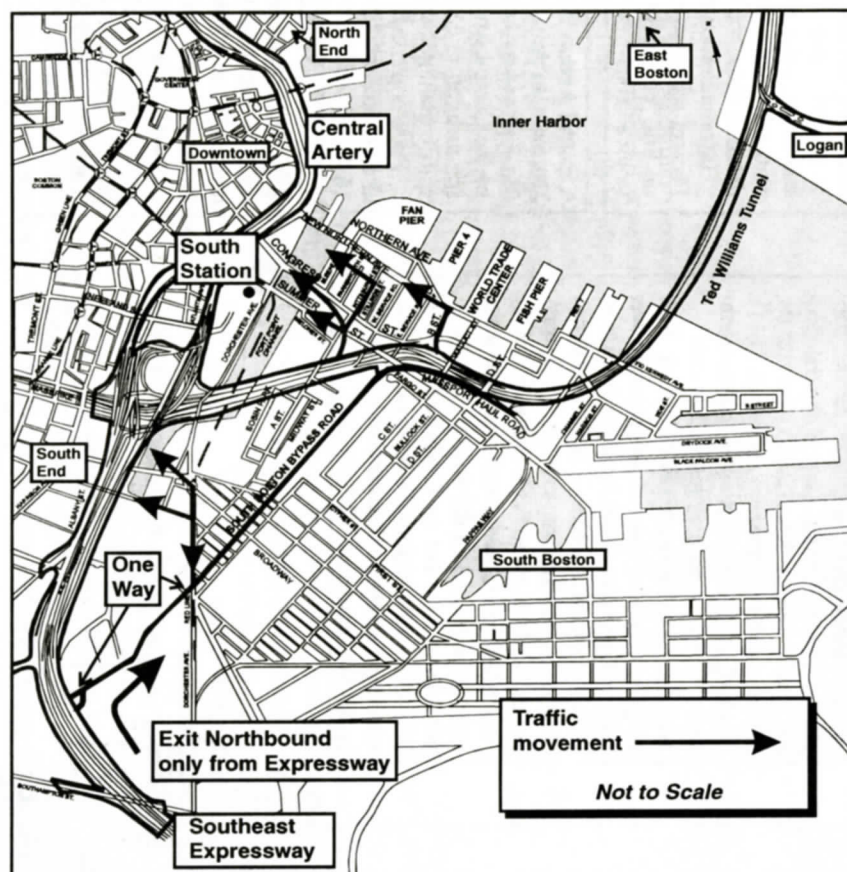
During the interim period, access to the tunnel on the South Boston side will be via local streets and the South Boston Bypass Road from the south only. Access to and from downtown will be bottlenecked when the new tunnel opens, because only one bridge over the Fort Point Channel—the old Northern Avenue Bridge—is presently open to trucks and buses (see "Bridges"). The official estimate of traffic using the new tunnel is 17,000 vehicles per day.

Massport released an Airside Improvements Feasibility study in late July, a million-dollar study prepared over one year largely without public involvement. Massport filed an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) on the improvements, initiating public review. A certificate from the Secretary of Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) is expected at the end of November.

EOEA is keeping busy with reports on the impacts of various Logan activities. Massport has filed a scope for the Generic Environmental Impact Report and notices about elements of the Logan 2000 master plan, underway. In the EOEA certificate on the Generic EIR, Massport was told to also consider comments on the airside ENF due to the interrelatedness of the two projects.

At issue are the physical implications and the lack of community participation. Recommendations for the 4,500-foot unidirectional 14/32 commuter runway have been opposed by East Boston, Winthrop, Mayor Menino, and others. The planning and participatory process was also criticized, and an Airside Review Committee made up of the Logan CAC, a group representing aviation and business, the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, and tourism boards has been set up.

The New Harbor Tunnel



You can't get there... The Ted Williams Tunnel will be a snap to get to from the south for taxis, trucks, and buses, but it won't be as easy from the west and north. The South Boston Bypass Road will funnel traffic directly from the Southeast Expressway, but other traffic will have to use local streets to get to the tunnel.

Marci Snyder graphic

Facts About the Ted Williams Tunnel

The Ted Williams Tunnel connects East Boston and South Boston with two travel lanes in each direction. Below are fun facts to amaze your friends:

- The tunnel consists of 12 binocular-section steel tubes encased in concrete, each weighing 33,000 tons.
- The tubes are sunk in a 100-foot-deep trench in the floor of Boston Harbor and joined end-to-end with massive rubber gaskets.
- Each section is 325 feet long, 80 feet wide, and 40 feet deep.
- The total length was intended to be 3,900 feet, but the last two sections were each fabricated about four feet short.
- Dredging for the trench began in early 1992.
- The original schedule had the tunnel, connected to the MassPike, opening to all traffic by 1994 and diverting over 40,000 vehicles per day from the Central Artery to alleviate traffic before downtown construction began. The tunnel will be open in Dec. 1995 to commercial traffic only.
- It will take less than 10 minutes on average to drive through the tunnel.
- About 4,600 bathrooms could be tiled with the tiles used in the tunnel.
- Original cost estimate: \$227 million. Actual cost: \$1.8 billion.

People Movers

Linda M. Haar, promoted from assistant director to deputy director for planning at the Boston Redevelopment Authority/EDIC.
Andrea D'Amato, executive director of Move Mass. 2000.
Joe Beggan, from deputy commissioner of Boston Transportation Department to Rizzo Associates.
Tony Cecere, formerly of Massport, to Goodkind & O'Dea consulting engineers.
John Moscadarelli to Boston Redevelopment Authority board (five-year term). He is currently a principal attorney at Peters, Smith and Moscadarelli
Mark Primack, from interim Move Mass. 2000 director to Land Trust for Duxbury
Jane Sherman, from the MBTA Environmental Unit, to other ventures
Hugh McCormack, from MBTA Planning, to other ventures
Phil Puccia, EOTC, to MBTA Chief of Staff

1 Central Artery utility relocations (water, sewer, electricity, gas, steam, telephone) are proceeding apace along the Central Artery corridor, Kneeland to North streets.
►Kneeland to Congress streets (C11A1): Gas line relocation (18 months) before north-bound tunnel construction (5 1/2 years).
►Congress to Broad streets (C14C1): New telephone, electric, water, steam, gas and sewer lines on both sides of the Artery and east/west utility corridor at Oliver Street. Temporary Northern Avenue on-ramp to Artery (2 1/2 years).
►East India Row to State Street (C14C4): New telephone, electric, water, gas and sewer lines on both sides of the Artery (1 year).
►Quincy Market to Callahan Tunnel (C14C2): Relocation of telephone, electric, water, gas and sewer lines and utility corridor under Surface Artery (2 1/2 years).

Attention: The MBTA is planning to dive into the Internet with its own home page containing up-to-date schedules for buses and trains; maps of bus routes; fares; information on taking the MBTA to special events; detailed snow routes; and more.

Information on the North-South Rail Link Project will also be available on-line with on-line "comment cards" for anyone to use to give input. Stay tuned....

Central Artery Environmental Oversight Committee Annual "Commitment Report" No. 3 provides a brief status report on progress by the Central Artery/Tunnel project in meeting mitigation commitments to air quality, traffic management, open space and transit.

For a copy, call Anne Fanton, director of the Environmental Oversight Committee, at (617) 451-2770.

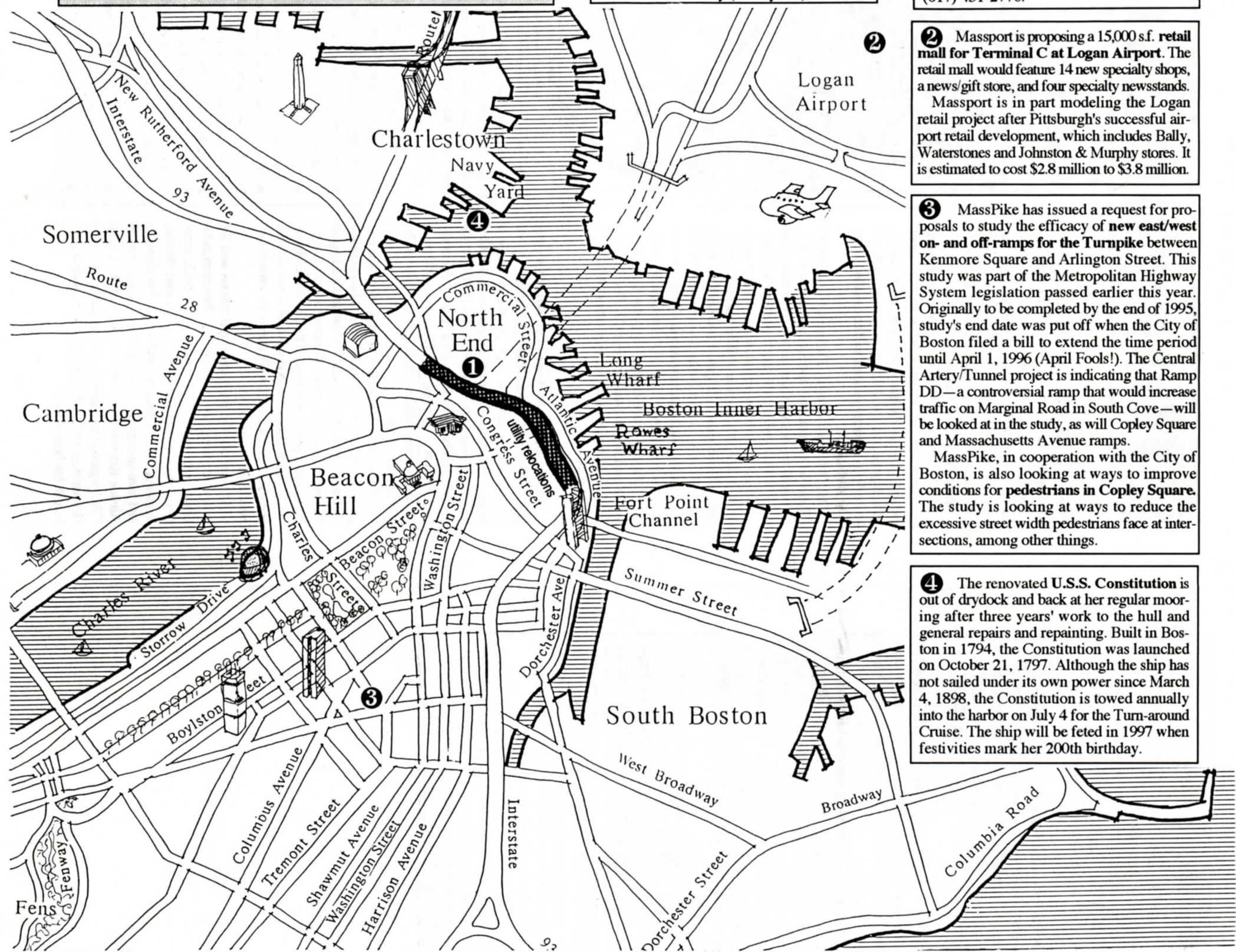
2 Massport is proposing a 15,000 s.f. retail mall for Terminal C at Logan Airport. The retail mall would feature 14 new specialty shops, a news/gift store, and four specialty newsstands.

Massport is in part modeling the Logan retail project after Pittsburgh's successful airport retail development, which includes Bally, Waterstones and Johnston & Murphy stores. It is estimated to cost \$2.8 million to \$3.8 million.

3 MassPike has issued a request for proposals to study the efficacy of new east/west on- and off-ramps for the Turnpike between Kenmore Square and Arlington Street. This study was part of the Metropolitan Highway System legislation passed earlier this year. Originally to be completed by the end of 1995, study's end date was put off when the City of Boston filed a bill to extend the time period until April 1, 1996 (April Fools!). The Central Artery/Tunnel project is indicating that Ramp DD—a controversial ramp that would increase traffic on Marginal Road in South Cove—will be looked at in the study, as will Copley Square and Massachusetts Avenue ramps.

MassPike, in cooperation with the City of Boston, is also looking at ways to improve conditions for pedestrians in Copley Square. The study is looking at ways to reduce the excessive street width pedestrians face at intersections, among other things.

4 The renovated U.S.S. Constitution is out of drydock and back at her regular mooring after three years' work to the hull and general repairs and repainting. Built in Boston in 1794, the Constitution was launched on October 21, 1797. Although the ship has not sailed under its own power since March 4, 1898, the Constitution is towed annually into the harbor on July 4 for the Turn-around Cruise. The ship will be feted in 1997 when festivities mark her 200th birthday.



To make the **Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Program** more developer friendly, Environmental Affairs Secretary Trudy Cox ordered revisions to the program drafted. The goals are: "improve the quality of environmental impact review by focusing it on significant cases, simplifying review triggers...and eliminating process that does not produce environmental benefits."

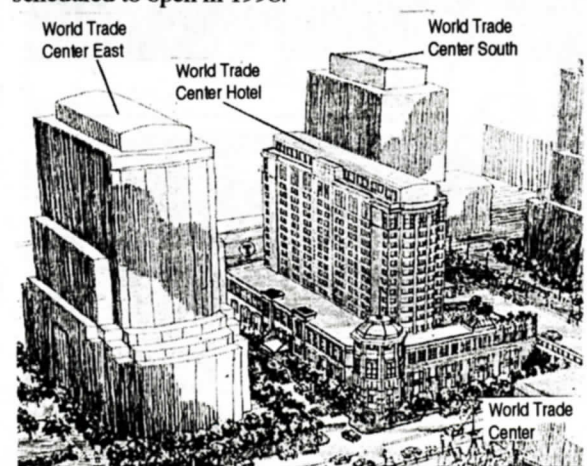
MEPA governs environmental review of state projects and private projects needing state permits. Proposed changes include reducing the number of projects automatically subject to review; changing the list of projects requiring an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to a list of thresholds of impacts; shortening the timeline by requiring only one EIR, requiring a Notice of Project Change only for "significant" changes; and simplifying the ENF.

Save the Harbor/Save the Bay commented on the proposals, admonishing MEPA that its purpose is not to promote development. It also cautioned that since the MEPA process is often the most meaningful way for the public to participate in project review, it is critical the process not focus solely on environmental outcomes.

Although the draft states that most of the proposed changes could be made without statutory amendments, legislation would have to be filed for some aspects. No word when MEPA will get around to asking for public comment on the draft changes. Call Jan Reitsma at 727-5830 for information.

Work has started on a 427-room luxury hotel at the **World Trade Center** on Northern Avenue in South Boston. The 16-story hotel, designed by The Stubbins Associates, will be linked to the World Trade Center by an enclosed walkway over Northern Avenue and will have 16,000 s.f. of meeting, dining and ballroom space, and 1,200 underground parking spaces.

The new hotel is owned by the owners of the World Trade Center, the John Drew Co. and Fidelity Investments. In addition to attracting visitors at the World Trade Center, the hotel will benefit from its proximity to the new federal courthouse, under construction on the Fan Pier, and the Ted Williams Tunnel. The hotel is scheduled to open in 1998.



The Bridges of Suffolk County...The Congress and Summer street bridges over the Fort Point Channel are undergoing major rebuilding efforts and are off limits to trucks over 2.5 tons. Both bridges are reduced to one traffic lane in each direction. The New Northern Avenue Bridge is still under construction, leaving the 100-year-old Northern Avenue swing bridge as the only connection for larger trucks and buses from South Boston to downtown.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority is seeking proposals for the eventual reuse of the historic bridge, but for the time being it must continue to carry high volumes of traffic due to several issues surrounding the new bridge. In addition to the location of the New Northern Avenue Bridge that makes routing traffic easily from the Northern Avenue off-ramp onto the bridge a problem, the MBTA plans to dig up the New Northern Avenue for three years (just as the new bridge is due to open) to build its underground transitway for electric buses from South Station to the Federal Courthouse and World Trade Center.

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'Temporary Tunnel' Opening

You were asking...

- Q. What happened to the huge "CASHMAN" sign on the drydock in East Boston?**
- A. After years of violating City of Boston zoning regulations, the CASHMAN sign was removed when the drydock was sold to Saudi Arabian interests.
- Q. What were the sounds of celebration coming from 260 feet under Boston Harbor on November 4?**
- A. They were the Boston Harbor project tunnel crews cheering when the sewer tunnel halves met and were joined, connecting Deer Island to Nut Island.
- Q. What sense does it make to squeeze all intercity buses into the too-small South Station Transportation Center (SSTC)? Why skip Back Bay, a huge employment center?**
- A. If the SSTC had been built as planned—for twice as many buses—it might make more sense. But the project was cut back for financial reasons, leaving no room for additional buses hoped for during the Big Dig. And it would seem essential to continue drop-off/pick up in Back Bay; otherwise Back Bay riders will need to take two trains to pick up the bus at the SSTC.
- Q. What are the new (HC) signs on the Southeast Expressway and around town?**
- A. Obviously not directions to Holy Cross college, these signs direct trucks carrying hazardous cargoes.

Welcome to The Boston Informer!

The goal is simple: provide concise public information on construction projects, planning initiatives, and whatever else affects living and working in Boston. Welcome to *The Boston Informer*!

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